



April 13, 2020

Contents

Employee Spotlight.....	1
Michael Womack, Jack Kauffman, Daryl Louder, David Houttekier, Jason Braunstein, Rodney Newlin, Ken Sterner, Joseph Boswell and Jeremy Falkenau – Thank You!	1
Page Hutchinson – Thank-You Very Much!	2
Action Required.....	2
Annual Inventory Reconciliation!	2
Training Opportunities.....	2
Forest Health Webinars	2
Project Updates	3
Urban Wood Project Update	3
Policy and Procedures	3
Items of Note	4
2020 Forest Health Review	4
COVID-19 Provisions Regarding Flexible Spending Accounts	4
Last Week.....	4
State Forester	4
Fire and Emergency Response:.....	4
Forestland Conservation.....	5
Forest Resource Management	5
Agency Lands	6
Water Quality	6
Western Region	6
Public Information	7

Employee Spotlight

Michael Womack, Jack Kauffman, Daryl Louder, David Houttekier, Jason Braunstein, Rodney Newlin, Ken Sterner, Joseph Boswell and Jeremy Falkenau – Thank You!

- ◆ Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) Deputy State Training Officer Michael Anderson sent the below thank-you for a job well done with the virtual Incident Command.
 - “I wanted to take a moment and say thank you as you have either demob'd or will be in the process of doing so. I wanted to acknowledge what you accomplished - you developed, maintained and sustained an Incident Command System structure in the virtual environment while combating

a global pandemic. This has never been done before. What you accomplished is nothing short of amazing.

Think about it - we came together for the first time on Wednesday, March 18th and, working from scratch, you had a fully functional draft Incident Support Plan on Sunday, March 22nd that was implemented the next day. Furthermore, you created a framework in which we'll work for weeks to come. As you enter into your well-deserved and much-needed rest, I hope you reflect with pride on this incredible and first-ever achievement.

It was a pleasure to work with each of you. The circumstances of our world require us to come together again soon. However, as you take a break, please know VDEM and the people of Virginia are very grateful for your service. “

Page Hutchinson – Thank-You Very Much!

- ◆ Page Hutchinson received the below message from Makana Kahaulelio (Hawaii Project Learning Tree coordinator).

“Just here to let you know - you are my hero!

Yesterday while I was trying to figure out what to do for an online presentation to a class of Pre-Service Teachers (originally we were going on a field trip to an arboretum near their campus ... but covid-19 😊) your email came in and just like that I had the resource I needed to do what I wanted with the group: 1) Intro the activity in the e-book, 2)watch the video, 3)plan a lesson, 4)present to the group. 5) YAY!

I, and I'm sure a lot others really appreciate your time, talent and sharing!

Mahalo nui loa, “(Thank-You very much in Hawaii native language)

Action Required

Annual Inventory Reconciliation!

It's that time of year again, the annual inventory reconciliation!

- ❑ Please follow directions below and have your signed and dated inventory to Kristi Clore no later than **May 8, 2020**.
 - Asset owners may generate inventory reports in IFRIS by selecting “Program Areas | Asset Management | My Property Inventory Report | Print Preview.”
 - After the report is generated, select “Print.”
 - Asset owners will then verify the accuracy of the report by physically inspecting all inventory items that are assigned to them and signing the report.
 - Any discrepancies should be noted in the report. If necessary, fill out a Form 3.22 Property Inventory Addition, to add an item that is missing from your inventory, or Form 26 Damaged, Lost or Stolen Property Certificate, to remove a damaged, lost or stolen inventory item.
 - **Even if you do not have any inventory items you must still sign and return your inventory report.**

Training Opportunities

Forest Health Webinars

- ◆ With so many meetings being cancelled, now may be a good time for continuing education. Here are some sites with access to forest health webinars:

- NAISMA (North American Invasive Species Management Association) has opened their webinar library for the month of April. These webinars are usually available to members only, so this is your chance to watch them for free! <https://www.naisma.org/about/why-naisma/>
- Southern Regional Extension Forestry, Forest Health Program also has a good library of quality webinars: <http://southernforesthealth.net/webinars>

Project Updates

Urban Wood Project Update

- ◆ It all started with a phone call from Mike Ronayne, the city's urban forester, about a dying willow oak on the Charlottesville Downtown Mall. Interested in the urban wood movement and knowing that the removal of this tree would be a well-publicized event, Mike turned to VDOF's Lara Johnson (urban and community forestry program manager) who recognized the opportunity for an urban wood success story and immediately contacted Joe Lehen (urban wood program coordinator).

Once felled, the log was milled by Jim Hart of Brookside Farm Sawmill Services from Scottsville, Virginia. From there, the wood traveled to Harrisonburg where it was dried and prepared for assembly by Rocktown Urban Wood. Adjacent to Rocktown Urban Wood (Brad Wroblewski) is Modus Workshop (Nathan Cooper) which did the laser engraving on the back of the bench. It should be noted that both Rocktown Urban Wood and Modus Workshop donated all of their labor costs for this project. Trees Virginia paid for the fabrication of the metal frame and log milling.

Presently the bench sits outside of Becky Woodson's (forest management programs coordinator) office in Charlottesville (pictured). Once we move past the coronavirus pandemic, Charlottesville has plans to place the bench at Clark Elementary School where there will be a late Arbor Day celebration.



Policy and Procedures

- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 4-1 Prescribed Burning](#) Two changes have been made:
 1. Changed parameters used for calculating the Ventilation Factor. National Weather Services has changed mixing height units of measure from meters to feet.
 2. An exception has been related to the burn day approval of non-VDOF 4pm burn exemptions.

Exception: When the Cumulative Severity Index, as measured at the closest VDOF measurement location to the burn site, is less than 100, the relative humidity approval threshold may be reduced to: greater than or equal to 20 percent.

Items of Note

2020 Forest Health Review

- ◆ The forest health program has extra copies of the 2020 Forest Health Review, also found online [here](#). If you'd like a package of these publications for your office, or to send to landowners in your area, please email Lori Chamberlin at lori.chamberlin@dof.virginia.gov

COVID-19 Provisions Regarding Flexible Spending Accounts

- ◆ Expenses incurred after December 31, 2019, for over-the-counter (OTC) drugs and medicines may be submitted for reimbursement from Health Care FSA funds without requiring a prescription from a physician. This includes drugs and medicines needed in quarantine and social distancing, and also adds feminine hygiene products to the list of eligible OTC items.
- ◆ **NOTE:** Due to the new legislation, some vendor locations or online sources may not be updated to recognize these items in their Inventory Information Approval System. A vendor's approval system is not within PayFlex's control, so if the PayFlex card does not work at the point of sale, participants may pay upfront and submit the receipt for reimbursement.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Virginia received \$1,266,200 through the USDA Forest Service (USFS) Secure Rural Schools Payments program. The USFS has distributed more than \$215 million to 41 states and Puerto Rico for distribution to 742 eligible counties this year. Funds will be used to support public schools, roads and specific county programs.

Fire and Emergency Response:

- ◆ Due to safety concerns and the constraints placed on us by the recent Governor's executive order, VDOF has made the following changes to its prescribed fire activities until further notice:
 - We have made the agency decision to discontinue prescribed burning at this time. We came to this conclusion for many reasons, including:
 - a. We have many field staff engaged in COVID-19 related response at the EOC, at the JIC, and working with regional VDEM staff, so we are stretched too thin at the moment.
 - b. All burns require a group of several people. Even if it is less than 10, it seems like an unnecessary risk for our folks.
 - c. Burns are inherently a little risky to people. We rarely have injuries and almost never burns, but now seems like a terrible time to be in an emergency room for something that can readily be avoided.
 - d. Although the air quality impacts from our size burns are generally very small, they do exist, and public perception of air quality is heightened by COVID-19. We don't want to undermine the benefits of our prescribed burning efforts by discounting the public's concerns during the current situation.
 - After discussions with the other major prescribed fire practitioners in the Commonwealth (The Nature Conservancy, Department of Conservation & Recreation, and Department of Game and Inland Fisheries), we have decided to cancel all exemption burns that had previously been approved for this Spring. No one will be able to burn before 4:00 pm until May 1. We still cannot

stop someone from burning between 4 pm and midnight, but we can greatly narrow the window, and, by extension, reduce the size area anyone can reasonably burn in one operation.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Charlie Becker (utilization and marketing manager) participated in a conference call on the status of the Hardwood Sub-Regional Timber Supply (SRTS) Model project with representatives from North Carolina and Kentucky forestry agencies, and NC State University. The Hardwood SRTS model will allow users to look at various forest management and impact scenarios and show how they can affect our forest makeup in the future. One of the initial uses of the new model will be to look at how increase in white oak demand will affect future forests. Initial testing of the model is planned for later this year.
- ◆ Charlie Becker attended a webinar by Forest Economic Advisors on Effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the U.S. economy, housing and wood product markets. They expect unemployment rates temporarily to jump to 20 percent or higher. The biggest impact is expected in the second quarter (April-June) with recovery starting in the third quarter. It will take about a year for most things to return to early-February numbers. Expect housing acceleration later in year. The outlook depends on large economic infusion into the economy and short recession period. Total debt percentage to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) could exceed 100 percent, leading to future inflation and other issues. Additional information is available on their website: <https://www.getfea.com/>
- ◆ Charlie Becker attended a webinar by the IMPLAN Group looking at ways to model impacts of the COVID-19 virus in the economy. A copy of the webinar and other information is available at: https://info.implan.com/coronavirus-economic-impacts-recording?utm_campaign=20200326_Coronavirus&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=85334450&hsenc=p2ANqtz-9_sDDX20CB_isPJKT1nC66V6t3BsLy4dDUq9GxWW5XofgT5GVak28CFEKcOIQcOBn8sgoh0clNoQYDO6fQfersfhfr9OSkbs1NUHm7GG5KpBlkJ8&hsmi=85334450
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (urban and community forestry partnership coordinator) and Eli Podyma (Richmond City community forester) participated in a conference call with Virginia Alcohol and Beverage Control (VA ABC) and Cite Design to discuss the landscaping for their new facility in Hanover County. VDOF will partner with both the landscape architects and VA ABC to determine species selection around the campus. A large portion of the property will be replanted with VDOF seedlings to mitigate wetland requirements.
- ◆ Lara Johnson and Molly O'Liddy participated in a conference call with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Plans are in the works to assist with putting on an urban soil reclamation demonstration to partners in the southside Richmond area.
- ◆ VDOF, Trees Virginia and the Green Infrastructure Center hosted a webinar on Trees and Green Stormwater Infrastructure on April 3 with 186 attendees. Topics included a tree stormwater calculator, ordinance audit and Land Image Analyst.
- ◆ Lara Johnson participated in a conference call for the Chesapeake Bay tree canopy state leads to discuss collaborative efforts to work Bay-wide to enhance urban tree canopy.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Forest Inventory and Analysis crews have completed approximately 43 percent of the current panel of plots. Overall plot measurement is down somewhat due to some issues associated with the current situation.
- ◆ VDOF has received the draft of the annual Forest Inventory data tables from the USFS. VDOF is reviewing these for accuracy before they are distributed.

- ◆ Todd Groh (forest resource management program coordinator) is serving as a member of the Plans section of the State Emergency Operations Center.
- ◆ The forest health staff, led by Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) and assisted by the regional forest health liaisons, is approximately halfway through the annual southern pine beetle trapping season.
- ◆ Meredith Bean (emerald ash borer (EAB) coordinator) is placing EAB traps, particularly in counties that are not yet confirmed.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Jim Schroering (southern pine bark and longleaf pine coordinator), Jerre Creighton (research program manager), Ones Bitoki (tree improvement manager), Dennis Gaston (eastern area state forests' manager) and Harvey Darden (director of agency lands) top-grafted 97 longleaf pine scion onto root stock in the New Kent Forestry Center longleaf orchard. The native Virginia scion was collected from older parent trees within the orchard. By top-grafting the scion onto established three- to four- foot tall root stock, two goals are achieved. One, an orchard selection is created from a known parent and a successful graft will be an exact duplicate or clone of its parent. Two, grafting stimulates early flower production and thus cones and seed will be generated sooner than non-grafted trees.
- ◆ Garland Gray Forestry Center personnel are preparing the fields for next season's planting with a target of 32 million loblolly pine seedlings produced.
- ◆ Tammy Ingle (state forest administrative staff assistant) assisted Ed Stoots (state lands coordinator) with a timber sale at Central State Hospital.
- ◆ Tom Zaebst (assistant state forests manager) participated in a conference call with JMU Professor Tom Benzing and senior student Jonathan Fosbury, regarding Jonathan's capstone course which captured professional grade GPS data for all the trails, streams and points of interest on the First Mountain State Forest. They are sharing their data with VDOF and also hope to work toward improving trout habitat on the forest in cooperation with VDOF. There has been additional interest in First Mountain State Forest from other professors at JMU seeking natural resource and cultural education opportunities.
- ◆ Augusta Forestry Center continues to pack and ship orders for this season. Orders YTD total 1,036.

Water Quality

- ◆ The results are in for BMP monitoring for 2019 with excellent results for the year. The statewide median tract score of 95 percent implementation, and 96.9 percent within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed is outstanding and more than meets our requirement of 95 percent in the Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) by 2025. Most noteworthy is that zero percent of the 240 tracts monitored had any active sedimentation present, and only 1.8 percent had a significant risk present on the site at the time of the monitoring. These are numbers that the logging community can be proud of; it takes an extraordinary effort for our field inspectors to ensure that the BMPs are put in place. Thank you for a job well done!

Western Region

- ◆ The VDOF Western Regional office in Salem has been identified by VDEM as a personal protective equipment (PPE) distribution site. Dylan White (forest technician) and Chris Thomsen (regional forester) cleaned out the cold storage building for what is expected to be a weekly tractor-trailer delivery of PPE. Virginia National Guard will be on site to unload and facilitate pick-up by local municipalities.

- ◆ Just two weeks after the Mountain Valley Area Team planted live stakes at Augusta Forestry Center, they're already sprouting! (pictured)

Public Information

- ◆ Page Hutchinson (PLT coordinator) and Raina DeFonza (public information specialist) finalized a video of Project Learning Tree activity "Adopt a Tree." This lesson teaches students how to identify and explore their favorite tree and to keep an Adopt a Tree Journal. This resource will be included in the "stay at home" educational links on the VDOF website (<http://dof.virginia.gov/edu/index.htm>), [PLT YouTube channel](#), and shared on our social platforms.
- ◆ Janet Muncy (integrated media manager) has been assigned to the EOC to support the planning function to help the VDOF team assemble the final components of the VDEM Incident Support Plan.
- ◆ Michelle Stoll has completed her assignment with the VDH communications team.
- ◆ Two posts by Ellen Powell (conservation educator) were published to the Field Notes blog – [Good Green, Bad Green](#) and [Sounds of Spring](#).

